

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY GUIDELINES

The attached policy outline includes those elements which meet the criteria established by the Montana State Library Commission for its Blacktail Mission Statement:

Collection management policies, considered and formally adopted by governing entities, are a prerequisite to maintaining a useful materials collection. Accordingly, the Commission now requires that any entity applying to the Commission for any grants after July 1, 1986, shall have a written collection management policy in place and on file at the Montana State Library. The requirements for Collection Management Policy approval have been augmented. The new requirement states that the library's collection management policy must be reviewed and updated (with the current board chair/legal authority's and director/librarian's signatures) at least once every three years and resubmitted in its entirety to the Montana State Library.

It is important, therefore, that all libraries in Montana develop and adopt a policy in order to be eligible for future funds which are administered by the Commission.

This is an outline for a collection management policy, not a selection policy. A selection policy describes the procedures and policies for adding material to the collection. A collection management policy includes the elements of a selection policy, but it also describes how the library's collection serves its users, where the strengths and weaknesses are, how the collection relates to those in other local libraries, and what the goals are for the development of the collection.

The policy should be written for the library staff, the library board, the governing organization, and the patrons of the library. It should both guide the collection management activities and explain those activities and their results to others.

The length of such a policy varies with the complexity of the collection and the complexity of the community of users the collection serves. Each category in the outline is important and should be addressed, at least to the extent appropriate for your library. Your statements within each category may vary from one sentence to several paragraphs. Unlike most policies, the collection management policy should err on the side of specifics rather than generalities. The questions and statements within each section of the outline are for your guidance in considering your library's situation and in writing the policy.

You may want to start with brief statements, especially if this is your first attempt at writing a collection management policy. The process of examining the current collection and planning for its development is more important than the actual document. Also, a collection management policy should not be static. It should be frequently reviewed and changed to reflect changes in the library's goals and in the collection itself.

As you work on your collection management policy, if you need further input or have questions, please call the Montana State Library, Statewide Library Resources, at 406-444-5349.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Mission Statement: What is the library's reason for existence? What is the library's role in the community? The mission of the governing organization or parent institution may also be included.
2. Purpose of the Policy: How will the policy be used for library management, planning, and accountability to the governing organization and library users?
3. Community and User Groups Defined: Briefly describe the community served (town, county, school, business, etc.) in terms of size, population, location, economic base, etc. Describe the primary, secondary and occasional users of the library in terms of ages, education levels, occupations, numbers, frequency of use, reasons for use, etc.
4. Patron Needs and Services/Programs Defined: What educational, recreational, and/or research needs must be met? Consider the needs of children, students, senior citizens, handicapped, business people, and other segments of the population. What services and/or programs does the library offer to meet these needs? (Examples: children's programs, homebound service, literacy tutoring, online database searching, telefax delivery of interlibrary loan materials, etc.) What needs are not being met?
5. Brief General Statement Describing the Collection: In general, how would you describe the library's collection? What is the size (in volumes or titles)? By how much does it grow each year? What reading or information levels (preschool, school levels, adult, technical/professional) are collected?
6. Cooperative Collection Management & Interlibrary Loan: How does use of interlibrary loan affect collection decisions? What cooperative agreements, if any, are in effect? Do you have deposit collection arrangements with other libraries, classroom teachers, the jail, nursing homes, etc.? Are the holdings of other libraries in WLN or within the community considered before a title is purchased? Under what circumstances?

B. GENERAL PRIORITIES, LIMITATIONS AND POLICIES

1. Chronological Coverage: This refers primarily to the publication dates of the titles in the collection. Do you have mostly current information? Are older publications kept for historical or research purposes? Distinguish between older material intentionally retained and material that needs to be withdrawn.
2. Formats: Describe which formats of information the library collects: books, periodicals, newspapers, sound recordings, videotapes, films, slides, software, microfilm, CD-ROM, online databases, etc. Are paperbacks, textbooks, large print or microforms purchased or collected? Under what circumstances and to what extent? Is there a need to collect in a format you don't yet have?
3. Multiple Copies: Does the library normally purchase multiple copies of books or other items? How is the determination made to purchase or place in the collection duplicates?

4. Languages: Is material collected in languages other than English? (Examples: "Maintain collection of adult and juvenile Spanish fiction." "Collect classic French and German literature to support undergraduate courses.")
5. Funding Considerations: How are funds for materials obtained and allocated? Are funds obtained from any special sources, such as a trust fund, donation fund, friends group, grants? Are funding formulas tied to enrollment?
6. Collection Responsibilities and Selection Procedures: Who selects materials? What general processes or procedures are involved? What criteria are used for selection? The information from an existing selection policy could be reviewed and added here.
7. Gifts Policy: Do you accept anything offered? What do you add to the collection? How do you dispose of unwanted gifts? Do you accept gifts with "strings" or restrictions attached? Do you accept monetary gifts, bequests? Who makes the decisions about gifts? Be sure to mention that you do not appraise materials and therefore will give receipts only for the number of items, not for their value.
8. Collection Maintenance: Why, when and by what criteria do you withdraw or weed items? (Examples of weeding guidelines: outdated information; poor physical condition; unneeded duplicates; subject not within scope of collection management policy.) Policies concerning rebinding, repair and replacements should be addressed here.
9. Complaints and Censorship: Include the full procedure, policy and forms used by the library. The Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read statement, and any other relevant policies should be appended to the collection policy.

C. SUBJECT AREAS COLLECTED

1. Subjects: The detail of this section will depend on the size and needs of the library. Three common approaches are described below. Choose or adapt the one most relevant to your library's collection. Be as general or as specific as you need to be to have useful information for development of the collection.

a. Broad categories, e.g. History, Science & Technology, Social Sciences, Literature, General Reference, Religion, etc., or curriculum areas.

b. Broad classification number categories: Dewey: 000's, 100's, 200's, 300's...
Library of Congress: A's, B's, C's...

c. Specific classification number categories, for example:

Dewey:	900-909	History
	910, 914-919	Travel
	910-912, 914-919	Geography
	913	Archaeology

L.C.	E51-99	Indians of North America
	E101-135	Discovery & exploration of America
	E186-199	Colonial history
	E201-298	Revolution

2. Present Collection Levels: Within each of the subject categories established in section #1, give a brief description of your current collection in that subject. Be sure to include all formats: books, periodicals, audiovisual, government publications, etc. in your description and assessment of each subject area. At the minimum, give some indication of the strengths and weaknesses of your collection in each subject area. (Examples: "The library does not collect in this area." "Have current reference sources, 10-15 circulating books, but all are more than 25 years old.")

You may combine brief descriptions with standard collection level descriptions, such as the following:

Out of scope: means the library does not collect in this subject.

Minimal level: have a few good items.

Basic level: have an up-to-date collection that will introduce readers to the subject and indicate the varieties of information available elsewhere.

Study level: have a collection adequate to support undergraduate instruction & sustained independent study. Includes material at all appropriate reading levels.

Research level: includes all the major published source material required for dissertation research.

If your library has used a conspectus methodology to assess the collection, you may choose to use the assessment level codes (0, 1a, 1b, 2a, etc.) in this section. [If you would like information about the conspectus method of assessment, please contact the State Library.]

3. Future acquisition levels or goals: Again within each subject area in section #1, indicate your needs and goals for that subject. How do you intend to change the collection? What are your priorities? Within what time frame? If the area needs weeding, or other specific action, that may be a goal in addition to the acquisition goals for new titles. (Examples: Weed "Science & Technology" collection by mid-1989. Upgrade "Medicine" collection from minimal to basic level by 1991. Work toward study level for "Local History" collection. Priorities are: Local history, current fiction, and business (adult collection); support for summer reading program (children's collection.)
4. Special collections: Describe any subject areas or format collections which the library maintains as a strong or unique collection. These may be materials that are shelved separately or that do not circulate. (Examples: rare books on the history of skiing; local history collection; slide collection; vertical file collection.) [Note: Special collections require extra care and investments of time and money to properly maintain and develop. Consider carefully before starting a special collection. If you have one already, consider if it truly fits with the library's mission and collection goals. It may be more appropriate to integrate it into the general collection or to donate it to another library.]

5. Other considerations: Information on languages, formats and chronological coverage may be noted within each appropriate subject area, if the general statements in section B above are not sufficient for your library or if a particular subject segment is an exception. If a collection assessment has been done, information about the methods used, the personnel involved and the dates and depth of the process should be noted.

D. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION, AND REVISION

How, when and by whom will the policy be reviewed and updated? Try to be specific. (Examples: "Every June by the librarian and trustees." "Every two years, beginning in 1990, by the library-faculty committee.") [NOTE: The requirements for Collection Management Policy approval have been augmented. The new requirement states that the library's collection management policy must be reviewed and updated (with the current board chair/legal authority's and director/librarian's signatures) at least once every three years and resubmitted in its entirety to the Montana State Library.]

The last item on the policy should be the official record of action. This should include dates and signatures of the significant parties concerned. For example:

_____	_____
Librarian	Date
_____	_____
Chair, Board of Trustees	Date

or whatever would constitute official action for a policy for your library. The action to adopt the policy should be recorded in the minutes of an official meeting.